

New Hampshire Rail Transit Authority

Chair: Peter Burling

Vice Chair: Katherine Hersh

Meeting Summary

March 25, 2011

10:00 am

LOB 201

Present: Ray Gagnon, Rep Williams, Kit Morgan, Malcolm Taylor, David Preece, Tim Moore, Kerrie Diers, Kathy Hersh, Mike Izbicki, Senator Molly Kelly, Stephen Pesci, Ted Starkweather, Mike Tardiff, Tom Mahon

- I. Call to Order – 10:00 am with no quorum present
- II. Public Input – none
- III. Minutes of February 25, 2011 were tabled
- IV. HB 218 –
 - a. Status: Passed in the house; Rep Williams stated he was for ITL. The vote was 194 -119 in favor; 84 did not vote. Senator Kelly reported that the bill will be heard in Senate Transportation Committee on Thursday and will be the last bill of the day at 11:00 LOB 103. She suggested that we contact members of the Transportation Committee.
 - b. Next Steps: Senator Kelly was not sure if the bill will be voted on Thursday as it the last session of the day. David Preece asked if we could have the contact info for the committee members. Kathy will send a link with contact info. Steve Pesci suggested that the committee be sent the original press release for the granite state poll. Sen. Kelly suggested that we get the info to the committee members prior to Thursday so they will have an opportunity to review it.
- V. NH Capitol Corridor Update
 - a. Schedule - Kit Morgan reported that the request for letters of interest is posted on the website. The next steps are to create a short list of consultants, invitations to submit proposals and selection. Selection committee is headed up by Assistant Director Craig Green and other project team members. Kathy Hersh asked if there was a more definitive schedule regarding consultant selection? Not really, the committee has a meeting schedule and Kit could project possible dates. The committee determines the schedule.
 - b. Match – Kathy Hersh asked if the FRA grant has been approved. Not yet. This is probably a couple of months. David Preece asked if the authority could do anything to speed up the process. Kathy Hersh asked if this still fits in with our schedule. Kathy will leave this

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item on the agenda so that we can get an update of where we are at every month. The FTA is all likely secure. The FRA funds were proposed to be rescinded in the house continuing resolutions but have not been in any of the continuing resolutions. This was not stimulus money so is not at the top of the priority list to cut.

FTA funds/work is going ahead. If the match for FRA is approved in the budget, we can go forward with the FRA portion of the work. The idea is that the consultant selected for the FTA funds would also do the FRA tasks, so no additional consultant selection process would be needed.

VI. **Plaistow Update**

Tim Moore reported that the Pentucket agreement negotiation is moving forward, the committee is continuing to draft the letter of intent notice for the consultant to do the environmental work. David Preece asked where the money was coming from for the environmental work. The funding is from CMAQ with MBTA providing the match. Congressman Guinta had a town meeting in Plaistow with 200 people in attendance. Chris Sununu was also in attendance and the committee expects to follow up with him in the next few weeks.

Steve Pesci suggested that Tim put together a 1 page paper with a map, this is a great rail story – we should develop a press release to get the public to understand the importance of the track agreement. We need to get a link to the site where the agreement with the relevant points. We need to have a great graphic with this. We are a statewide board and should promote these developments. Mike Izbicki suggested that we get behind this as a board.

- VII. **State Rail Plan Update** – Ron O’Blenis presented a summary of the process so far. There was a successful first meeting of the Rail TAC, with 2 more meetings scheduled over the next few months. Two public meetings will be held on April 6 in Concord at the Planetarium and 7 in Littleton Community center at 6:00 pm. The agenda for the meetings will cover the preliminary data collected to date, preliminary vision and goals, overview of the process and plan, asking for input and perceptions from the public to have some discussions.

Kathy Hersh asked if there is a website that we can have a link to. It is on the state website. Kathy will put a link from the NHRTA site to the state rail plan website.

VIII. **Outreach –**

- a. **Resolutions** – no new
- b. **Presentations** - Mike Izbicki will be putting together a packet for the Senate, and will be putting together a marketing piece with Bill Lipfert. Nancy Larson and David Preece met with the editorial board of the Union Leader editorial board about HB218. Seemed receptive, great editorials from Chris Williams and Robin Comstock.

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- c. Tim Moore mentioned that outreach and education was mentioned many times during the rail plan TAC – we need to ensure that people are educated about benefits of rail. Ewe need to educate the general public to support the rail plan implementation. David Preece asked if there is an educational component of rail plan process. Ron O’Blenis said that public meetings were notified through a press release. The first public meeting is to solicit opinions / perceptions from the public as well as to educate them about freight and passenger rail. The second meeting in September would be to discuss preliminary findings. The state rail plan does not have an educational component per se, but the bigger opportunity is for when the rail plan is complete.

Steve Pesci stated that a second press release is already up on the website and was sent out. It was widely distributed. We need to emphasize the relationship between freight and passenger rail. Steve Pesci said that there were improvements to the train station in Durham; good rail stations become transit centers. C&J Bus is now operating a Durham – Portsmouth – NY City route. 60,000 rail and bus passengers per year are using the facility. Peter Griffin mentioned a Boston Chronicle rail connection and the importance of rail to Boston.

- IX. Non public session – none
- X. Adjourn – The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 am

Respectfully Submitted,

Kerrie Diers, NHRTA